DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 427 SO 014 242

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TITLE Education for a Multicultural Society: What Does It Mean? Of What Importance Is It in the Classroom? Curriculum Paper.
INSTITUTION Queensland Dept. of Education, Brisbane (Australia).
PUB DATE Nov 81
NOTE 15p.; Photographs may not reproduce clearly.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Comparative Education; Elementary Secondary Education; English Instruction; Foreign Countries; Learning Activities; *Multicultural Education; Social Studies; Student Projects; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Australia (Queensland)

ABSTRACT

This document provides general principles and learning activities for multicultural education in elementary and middle schools in Australia. Participating schools integrated multicultural learning into the existing curriculum. The general principles which evolved from the project are that education for a multicultural society involves more than an examination of the literature, art, music, and architecture of a particular group. Parents and the wider society outside the school need to reinforce the aims of the multicultural program and, because multiculturism means different things to different people, differences of opinion must be accepted in the same spirit accorded to cultural differences. Activities to enhance students' sense of their multicultural society include reading variations of the same fairy tale, e.g., "Cinderella" in German and French translation and in English; displaying information about significant days celebrated by various ethnic groups; studying derivations of English words and learning foreign words for greetings; conducting reviews of multicultural resources in the school library; and researching special events, customs, and celebrations of different countries. The document concludes with a discussion of teaching social studies within a multicultural framework. (KC)

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Curriculum Paper

Curriculum Branch
Department of Education

ED221427

EDUCATION FOR A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
OF WHAT IMPORTANCE IS IT IN THE CLASSROOM?

SP 014 242

MULTICULTURALISM

THE BASIS FOR ACTION

POLICY STATEMENT ON MULTICULTURALISM

Australia is a multicultural society. Our schools have a vital role to play within this social context. It is therefore imperative that:

All Queensland State schools must help all children cope with the realities of living in such a society, secure in their own personal and cultural identities and tolerant of those of others, but aware of the strains and tensions implicit in multiculturalism and conscious of their responsibility to contribute to the national identity – the changing and growing 'common culture'.

Programs and provisions in all Queensland State Schools should emphasise the intrinsic worth of all peoples and the positive contributions that differences among groups and individuals make to the whole society.

The curriculum (the total learning experiences provided through the school) should be multicultural in choice of content and global in perspective. The variety of social and ethnic groups in Australian society should be made evident in the illustrations, stories, and information offered to children. All pupils should have access to accurate information about cultural similarities and differences. All people should be presented as individuals, preferably being allowed to speak for themselves, and not being judged exclusively against the norms of others.

Within the framework of such a policy it is possible to visualise the total curriculum permeated by multicultural objectives in which are embedded specific studies for and about different cultural groups, including those studies which have as a specific focus the language and language needs of members of different groups. Such a model avoids simplistic statements which suggest that teaching English as a second language, bilingualism, modern language study, or programs with such labels as ethnic studies are, of themselves, education for a multicultural society. It does, however, give recognition to the fact that all of these can be aspects of such an education.

Such a policy suggests a redirection or a change of focus rather than a complete redrafting of existing programs. If this redirection is to be effective and acceptable, ways must be found of involving the local community in both consultant and resource roles. But above all, changes must occur in people, as the change in focus is primarily affective, dealing with attitudes and dispositions. Sensitivity is needed in dealing with bias and prejudice as these occur in interactions, in subject matter, in books and other teaching materials, and in methods of presentation.

Such a policy implies also that this challenge will be met only when each school, as a whole, drawing on the support and resources of its community, of the Department and of other agencies, formulates a total and integrated plan of action appropriate to the particular needs of all the children it serves. – *Education Office Gazette*, May 1979

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

Since the publication of the Departmental policy statement on multiculturalism in the *Education Office Gazette*, May 1979, a range of initiatives has developed in support of multicultural education. The discussion paper *Education for a Multicultural Society* has been distributed to all State schools throughout Queensland. In-service workshops have been conducted on a school and regional basis to introduce teachers and administrators to the philosophy of multiculturalism. Multicultural Awareness Kits containing teacher reference books and a cross cultural simulation game have been made available to Teacher and Community Education Centres for lending to teachers. Resources suitable for implementing multicultural programs have been trialled in a number of schools and copies of a multicultural calendar have been distributed to all schools.

All of these activities can be considered as important initial steps. However, many classroom teachers are left wondering what all this really means to them, and frequently ask how the policy can be put into practice in the classroom. A number of schools have been exploring ways to apply the philosophy of education for a multicultural society, and have found the task to be an exciting experience. Their experiences form the basis of this paper.

The Schools

A teacher, attached to the Curriculum Branch, has been working with six schools assisting them in the process of developing and sharing ideas in order to apply the philosophy of education for a multicultural society. The schools involved are primary schools which represent a range of

school populations, varying in ethnic composition and socio-economic levels.

The staff in each school differed in their degree of involvement with multicultural education activities prior to their participation in the present project. Therefore, the amount and nature of the involvement of each school in the project necessarily varied.

The Project

Visits were made to the participating schools, to introduce interested teachers to a range of teaching ideas and resources to support the philosophy of multiculturalism. The approach was not structured in any way.

In no school was there an attempt to move outside the established program or school routine. It was important that education for a multicultural society not be seen as something 'extra', but rather as a logical and satisfying adaptation of the existing curriculum. Teachers were invited to reconsider their present current curriculum program, with a view to establishing a multicultural perspective to regular classroom activities. Activities varied according to existing programs and the extent to which the ideas were considered appropriate or relevant to the teacher and the children in their class.

As teachers began to apply the philosophy of education for a multicultural society to their classroom programs, a number of general principles became apparent.

WHAT THE EXPERIENCE SHOWS

• Multiculturalism must be more than a song and dance routine

The songs, dance and food of a group can provide an interesting and useful vehicle for understanding some aspects of its culture. However, the use of the term 'culture' in education for a multicultural society refers to a group's particular system of commonly held ideas, values, attitudes and perceptions, and therefore incorporates more than the superficial aspects of culture such as food and dance. Similarly, education for a multicultural society involves more than an examination of the 'high culture' of a particular group – that is, its literature, art, music or architecture.

In studying a particular cultural group, as many facets of its culture as possible need to be considered. Of course, food and dance help to illustrate some aspects of culture, especially in relation to family and community life. However it must be kept in mind that children's understanding of our multicultural society will be very superficial if they are served only the trimmihgs and not the substance.

Activities such as 'Greek Culture Week', 'Multicultural Day' and 'Aboriginal Artefacts Display' are also in danger of presenting a superficial view of the cultures represented in Australian society. Such activities can be a good focal point, but they should not be seen as the totality of education for a multicultural society.

If the cultures of our migrant and Aboriginal Australians are to be recognised and valued within our society, it is essential that schools present these cultures with the same degree of respect and consideration accorded to the dominant Anglo culture. Separate studies are not always the answer, especially when there is little or no recognition of ethnic groups in day-to-day school activities. If education for a multicultural society is to be more than a 'song and dance routine', all areas of the curriculum need to reflect a multicultural perspective. Opportunities to include ethnic content may present themselves at any stage during usual classroom activities. Similarly, opportunities can be provided to draw the attention of children to the variety of cultural perspectives from which many issues can be viewed.

• Australia in the 1980's has many living cultures

However, most of these studies have dealt with people living in other lands. Although studies of other countries remain a valid part of the curriculum, especially for the role they play in presenting Australia within a world context, the study of the homelands of migrant Australians can also provide useful insights into their culture in Australia. However, continual emphasis on cultures in other lands may leave children with the impression that Italian or Chinese culture is only relevant 'to the backhills of some country over the sea', rather than a living culture within Australian society. Similarly, *too much* emphasis on a historical approach (e.g. a study of ancient Rome or the architecture of ancient Greece) detracts from the realisation of the contributions of a variety of ethnic groups to modern Australian society.

• Schools can't do it alone

The way in which children react to the cultural diversity of Australian society will depend to a large extent on influences from their families and others with whom they interact outside of school. Attempts to develop programs to support education for a multicultural society will have only a minimal effect unless parents and the wider society are in tune with the aims of the programs.

The involvement of parents and other community members in multicultural education activities will help to foster support for multiculturalism in the wider society. The community provides a wealth of resources to be tapped

by the school, especially in areas of high migrant density. Even in school communities which appear to be entirely Anglo-Australian, one may not need to look beyond the grandparents of the children to uncover a diversity of cultural experiences.

Regardless of the ethnic background of members of the community, the principle of community involvement remains a crucial element in the success of education programs for a multicultural society.

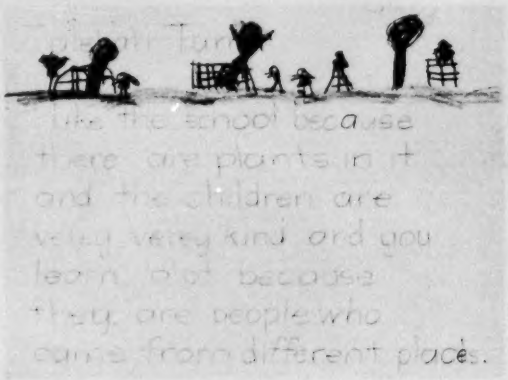
• No one's saying it's going to be easy

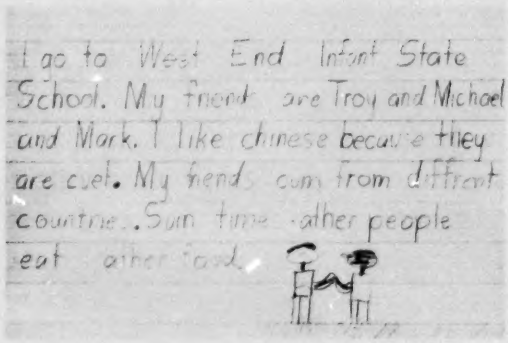
The aims of education for a multicultural society cannot be achieved overnight. A number of stages can be envisaged in fostering intercultural understanding. Firstly, there is an awareness of cultural diversity, followed by an understanding of the various cultural groups, and, finally, acceptance of the valued contributions these groups make to our society. The first of these stages is relatively easy to attain through organised classroom activities, but there is no certainty that the second or the final stage will ever be achieved in some classroom situations.

Perhaps a teacher's best aid for implementing education for a multicultural society is a realistic view of what can be achieved. Many enthusiastic efforts may be thwarted by expecting too much too soon. Although complex, the difficulty of the task does not lessen its importance.

• Multiculturalism means different things to different people

No blueprint exists for multicultural education that will work for every school in Queensland. There will be dif-


I like the school because
there are plants in it
and the children are
very very kind and you
learn a lot because
they are people who
come from different places.


I go to West End Infant State
School. My friend are Troy and Michael
and Mark. I like chinese because they
are cuel. My frend cum from diffrent
countrie. Sum time ather people
eat ather food.

• Multiculturalism is about people

Multicultural programs, no matter how well prepared or interesting, will have only a limited effect if the teacher is not committed to the demands of a multicultural philosophy. This commitment is perhaps best reflected in the way in which the individuality of the child is recognised within the school.

One of the schools involved in the project provides a particularly noteworthy example of school environment where individual differences and cultural diversity are valued. It is difficult to translate into words the pervading climate of mutual respect that is apparent as one steps inside the front gate. The children provide some insights when they tell of the many reasons for liking their school.

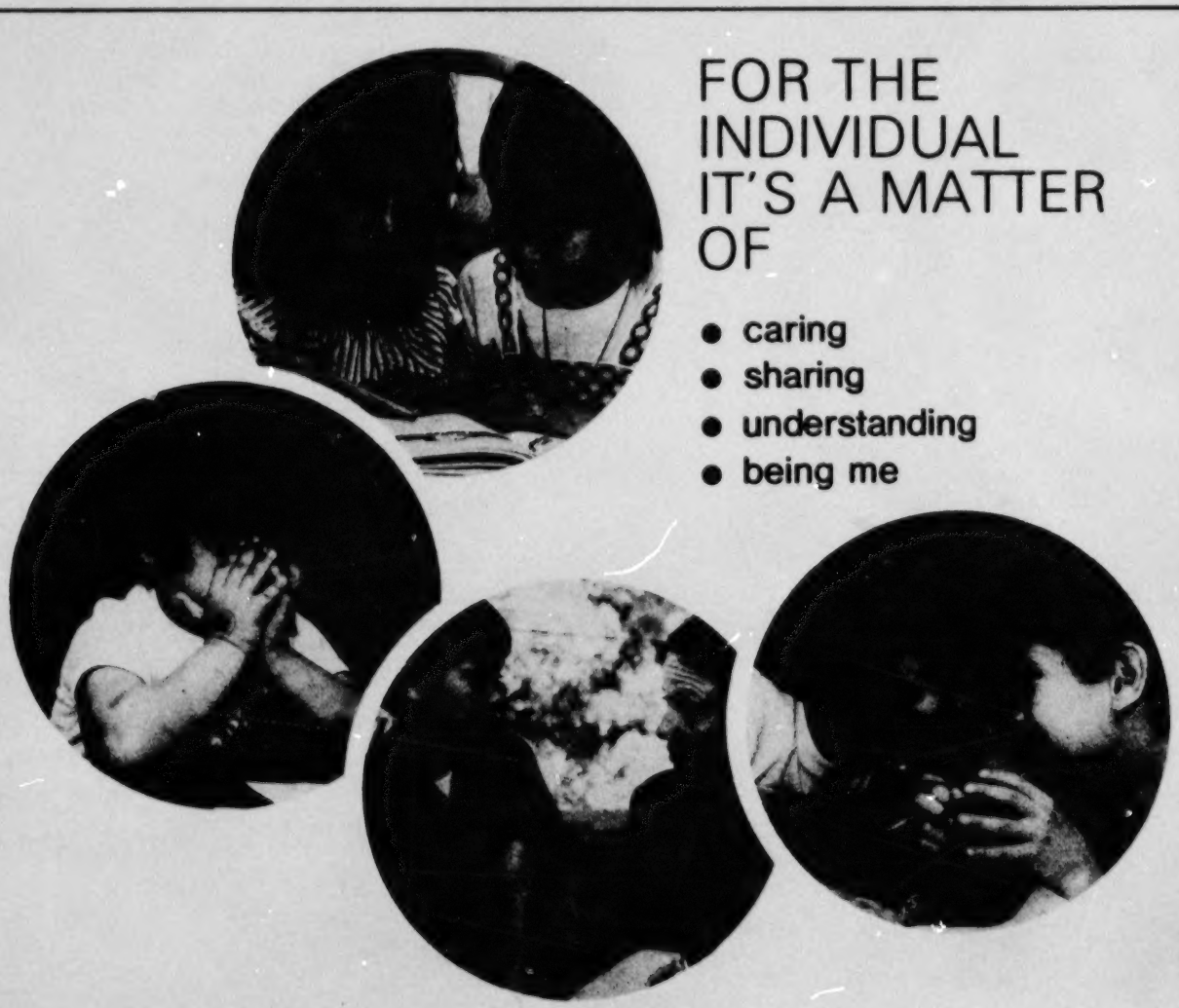
MY SCHOOL IS NICER BECAUSE .....

the children are very very kind
there are people who come
from different places
I have a lot of friends
I do homework and read books
my teacher is very kind
we can meet lots of children
that do not speak our language
there is enough room to play
we learn things
we have a nice playground
it is a pretty school
I like all the girls and boys
I like to work
there are lots of kind people
to play with us
the teachers are very nice there
I and my friends can learn
a lot of words
our school is beautiful
we are the nicest school
I have ever had
our school is the tidiest school
in the world

ferences between schools with a high proportion of students of ethnic origin and those with a predominantly Anglo-Australian population. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that all 'high migrant density' schools nor that all 'Anglo-Australian' schools will be comparable. Each will differ according to the size of the school, the amount of community involvement, the socio-economic status of the district, the ethnic groups represented, administrative policies, staffing, physical environment and facilities, available resources and so on.

Where children of varying cultural backgrounds are a significant part of the school community, subjects such as ethnic studies or community language programs have proven successful in fostering intercultural understanding. Intercultural studies programs and activities such as 'international days' or 'Greek culture week' can also be an excellent medium for enhancing the self-concept and ethnic pride of children at the school. Such activities may also be successful in predominantly Anglo-Australian schools. Although some of these approaches are more appealing than others, each can be a valid component of education for a multicultural society.

However, regardless of the ethnic composition of the school, the application of multicultural education appears to be closely related to the degree of commitment to multiculturalism by staff, students and the community. It can be expected that each person will differ in their awareness, understanding or acceptance of the cultural diversity of our society. These differences in opinion need to be accepted in the same spirit accorded to cultural differences. The aims of education for a multicultural society are more likely to be achieved if school programs are designed to involve teachers and children at their particular stage of acceptance, and at the same time to provide opportunities for individual development towards intercultural understanding.



WHAT CAN I DO?

A range of activities is possible as a vehicle for implementing the philosophy of education for a multicultural society. Here are a few examples:

1 FAIRY TALES

Library lessons for a group of Year 2 children at Patricks Road State School, provide many opportunities to look at fairytales around the world.

During one library session, for example, children were read the German version of Cinderella, followed the next week with the better known French version. The children, although already familiar with the story of Cinderella, were not aware of the variations to the story from country to country. In the third lesson, one of the English versions was presented and the similarities and differences between all the stories discussed. As there are at least five hundred versions of the tale, the possibilities for further discussion are endless.

Almost any well known fairytale could be presented from a cross-cultural perspective. The following reference books may be useful.

I. & P. Opie, *The Classic Fairytales*, Oxford University Press, London, 1974.

E. Cook, *The Ordinary and the Fabulous: An Introduction to Myths, Legends and Fairy Tales for Teachers and Storytellers*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1969.

M. H. Arbuthnot, *Time for Fairy Tales: Old and New*, Scott, Foresman and Co., Glenview, Illinois, 1961.

In addition, Library and Resource Services has produced a series of resource lists on folk tales and folklore of various countries. These lists have been distributed to all schools and should be located in the school library.

A cross-cultural approach allows children to appreciate that the stories they enjoy are also shared by children in other countries even though the stories sometimes differ a little from country to country. With children in the upper years it is possible to discuss in more detail the reasons for the differences between stories. For example: *Why do most of the German tales end grimly?* Other questions which could be explored include: *Which versions are most popular in Australia and why? Are there any modern variations on the theme? Is the fairytale world really one of castles, lollipops and 'happy-ever-afters'?*

The many points of commonality between fairytales in Europe can be an interesting area of study: the recurrence of the numbers 3 and 7 (three bears, three wishes, seven dwarves . . .); the recurrence of certain themes (triumph of good over evil; triumph of the simple kindly person, who is often the third sister or brother) and characters who share the same name in different languages (Jack, Hans, Jacques) or who have similar attributes. The extent of such commonalities in Asian or American folklore could form the basis of further comparative study.

This appreciation of fairytales across a number of countries helps children to understand the preoccupations common to people throughout the world as well as the extent to which the folklore of other cultures has influenced Australian folklore.

2 NOTICE BOARDS

Schools often have notice boards to inform students of events or to share interesting information. At Patricks Road, for example, a small blackboard is placed at the entrance to the library. Such boards provide a prominent spot for presenting information about days of significance to the many ethnic groups in Australian society.

Examples of the type of information that could appear are:

There are over 40 languages other than English spoken in Australia.

Arrivederci, Xaip ε te, Auf Wiedersehen, Farvel, Sayonara – *all say 'goodbye'.*

Melbourne is the third largest Greek city in the world!

English, German and Dutch were once the same language. The bousouki *is a Greek instrument very similar to a guitar.*

CAUTION! This should not be overdone!

The Queensland Multicultural Co-ordinating Committee Calendar, distributed to all schools, presents information which could be used on the notice board. Details for inclusion could also be based on experiences of children in the school, of community members, or the results of research by the children.

Similarly, a 'do you know' blackboard provides tidbits of information on a range of interesting facts, some of which may help create a better understanding of our multicultural society.

There are also lots of fascinating facts which are not necessarily 'ethnic' in content. The information about our migrant or Aboriginal Australians should not be seen as something 'special', but just as much a part of everyday school life as details of Captain Cook's voyage or activities of our famous political leaders.

3 LANGUAGE STUDY

A look at the English language can open up numerous areas of study. Many words in common usage are of non-Anglo Saxon origin, for example: barbeque, patio, parka, admiral, hamburger, pizza, billabong, biro. . .

Year 7 children at Patricks Road conducted a brief study of such words and their origins as part of a library class activity. The search for new words provided an interesting avenue for developing dictionary skills, as well as encouraging an examination of how the English language has been influenced by the borrowing of foreign words.

Other possible activities include examining how different languages express gratitude or greetings; researching the origins of various languages; examining why some languages have more words than others; and why some languages place more importance on certain types of words than do others.

Some primary schools are conducting modern language programs either in response to the needs of the local community or as a means of understanding and valuing other cultures. For example at Ironside State School, Japanese is being taught to Years 5, 6 and 7 pupils. Although the original aim of the program was to offer an enrichment activity to the children, the study of Japanese language and culture has provided a sound basis for fostering intercultural understanding. The program deals predominantly with spoken Japanese and concentrates on language associated with everyday life in modern Japan. The children are learning greetings, counting, telling the time, days of the week, months of the year, and conversational phrases. Japanese is introduced as having some functional value and not just as a 'quaint way' of saying things.

An essential element in the program is the cultural component – Japanese music, literature, and architecture as well as everyday aspects of life such as the home, school, and community life and their associated customs. Japanese cultural studies are also integrated into other class activities, especially in association with social studies lessons. The social studies program in the Year 7 class, for example, looks at Japanese history as well as aspects of modern Japan, especially in relation to, and in comparison with, Australian society.

4 STUDENT REVIEWS OF RESOURCES

The resources used in everyday school activities – reading books, library books, filmstrips – can sometimes reflect a monocultural view of society, firstly, and most blatantly, by the negative manner in which certain groups are portrayed; secondly by stereotyping the characteristics and/or activities of particular groups; and finally by devaluing the worth of any group by failing to acknowledge its existence.

At Serviceton school, it is anticipated that Year 7 students would be able to conduct a review of library and reading books as part of the library and language arts program. The review would be conducted either on an informal and incidental basis or within a more structured framework.

An incidental approach involves the teacher drawing the attention of the children to other ways of looking at the same issue, especially in regard to whether the 'whole' story is being told in any reading matter. As a more structured approach, and as a basis for the children's continual critical examination of materials, a series of tasks could be set similar to those outlined in the following worksheets.

A. Number of books examined: _____

Major topic of books: _____

Indicate examples of:

Stereotyping	Negative Treatment	Devaluation By Neglect

B.	*An/A	M/A	Ab/A
In how many stories is the main character	–	–	–
In how many pictures is there a person who is:	–	–	–
How many times is a person seen as	–	–	–
• helpful	–	–	–
• needing help	–	–	–
• a problem	–	–	–
• a nuisance	–	–	–
• eating	–	–	–
• dancing	–	–	–
How many times are adults shown			
• in different occupations	–	–	–
• in positions of authority	–	–	–

* An/A Anglo-Australian
M/A Migrant Australian
Ab/A Aboriginal Australian

C. List 10 adjectives that best describe 'you'.	How many stories are about people like you?
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

5 RESEARCH

1 SPECIAL EVENTS

Babka, chocolate eggs, bunnies, psalms, pasos, red eggs, green eggs, hot cross buns, mayerister, lilies – are all part of celebrating Easter for many Australians.

Events, such as Easter, provide a focus for studying various world-wide customs which are part of life for many people in Australia. The basis of any project on Easter is to examine the universal reasons Christians have for celebrating this religious festival, and the various ways in which people of different countries have come to observe it.

A project by Years 5, 6 and 7 children at Severnlea State School provides a practical example of a multicultural approach for studying the customs of others. The children were given the task of researching customs in a number of countries throughout the world, especially the countries of origin of the children (or their parents) at the school. The information the children collated is summarised below.

GERMANY

Germans colour eggs green on Green Thursday (Maundy Thursday). They carry the eggs with them all day for good luck. On Easter Monday, the young people have an egg rolling contest called *Eierlesn*. The winner gets a prize of 101 eggs.

GREECE

In Greece, the soup *mayerister* is eaten after midnight on Easter Sunday morning.

Hard-boiled eggs, dyed red, are a Greek tradition at Easter. The red eggs are placed in special Easter bread before baking. This is a symbol of good luck for the household.

BELGIUM AND FRANCE

In Belgium and France mothers sometimes tell their children that the Easter chimes signal that the eggs have arrived. Belgian children make nests of hay and hide them in the grass for the Easter Bunny to fill.

NETHERLANDS

In the Netherlands people in villages form processions on Easter Eve. On Easter Monday, young and old alike play games with eggs.

SPAIN
In Spain, cities and towns hold religious processions on Good Friday. In some places the processions feature *pasos* or wooden images mounted on platforms. Each platform represents a scene from the last week of the life of Christ.

POLAND
In Poland you eat a special Easter cake. It is wide and looks like an old woman's skirt. It is called *Babka*. This means old woman.

UNITED STATES
In the USA each year people decorate their churches to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. They decorate the churches with lilies and palms (palms – peace, lily – beauty and goodness).

Children receive candied Easter eggs, chocolate bunnies and chocolate lambs.

Many people dye Easter eggs. Some children paint faces on their eggs and dress them in funny paper hats. Others cover their eggs in flowers and funny cellophane or ribbon.

ITALY
In Italy, on the night before Easter you eat a special Easter pizza made with eggs.

Eggs are painted and hidden around the house or yard for the children to find when they are given the signal.

BRITISH ISLES
In Great Britain housewives bake hot cross buns on each Friday during lent. People in Ireland dance on Easter Day to win prize cakes.

MEXICO
In Mexico at noon on the day before Easter, thousands of people fill the streets. They beat, hang, and burn an effigy of Judas who betrayed Jesus Christ.

The Severnlea project found that many different customs associated with Easter are still very much a part of the lives of those Australians who identify strongly with their ethnic origins. Through the study of these customs and their commonality with accepted 'Australian' practices, the children came to a better understanding of the various ethnic groups that make up Australian society.

2 CUSTOMS AND CELEBRATIONS

Easter and Christmas (and any other celebration you wish to choose) can provide an opportunity for activities in a number of subject areas. For example:

Language Arts
- library research on topics
- written presentation of information
- speaking with and listening to community members
- reading literature associated with the event in various countries
- learning greetings associated with the celebration.

Maths
- measurement associated with cooking and craft activities.

Craft
- preparing food
- making decorations and costumes.

Music
- learning the songs and music associated with the particular celebration.

Social Studies
- determining the reasons why people celebrate such events
- examining how the environment influences the customs that develop
- considering ways in which the customs of some ethnic groups are modified in the Australian situation.

Physical Education
- games and dances from the various countries

6 A NEW LOOK AT SOCIAL STUDIES

The social studies program provides many opportunities for teaching and learning of concepts relevant to life in multicultural Australia. A number of the main objectives outlined in *A Guide for the Social Studies Teacher* reflect the shared experiences of cultural groups throughout Australia and the world. For example:

- all people have common basic needs which are satisfied in a variety of ways by a variety of people. (Year 1)
- the way of life is changing for many people. (Year 3)
- people moving to new regions must adapt their way of life to the change of environment. (Year 5)
- man uses his environment and his skills to produce the goods he needs. (Year 5)

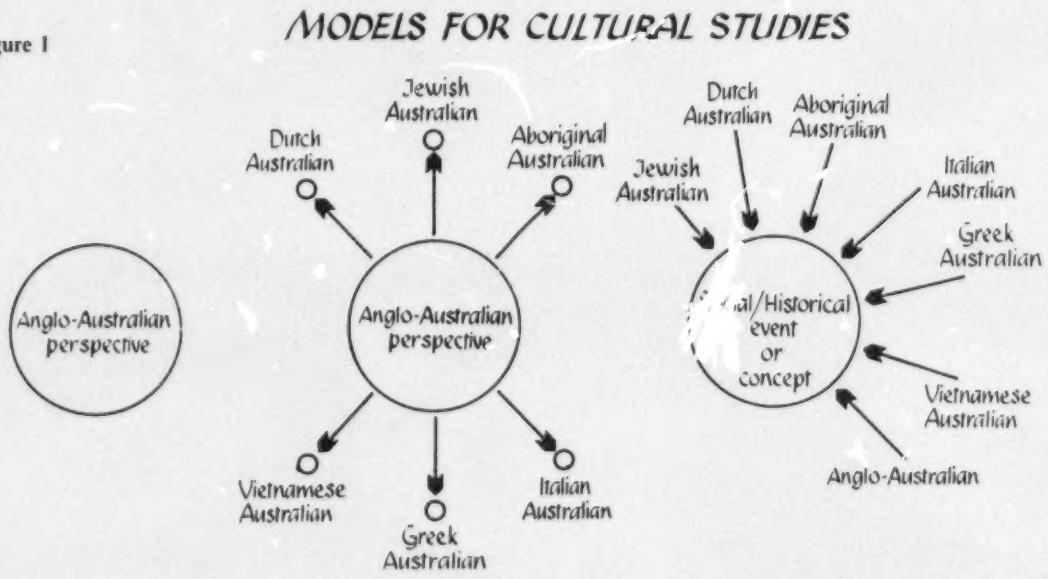
In achieving these objectives a number of activities are possible, and there are at least three ways of presenting the suggested learning experience. Firstly, a monocultural approach can be adopted, in which the main idea reflects an entirely Anglo-Australian perspective. An extension of this approach is one which focuses on the Anglo-Australian situation, dealing with other perspectives as exceptions. The third is a multicultural approach in which a concept or main idea is the focus of study and the various ethnic and cultural perspectives are studied as exemplars and highlighters of the underlying concept. Banks[1] has presented a series of models which reflects the three approaches (Figure 1).

To ensure that the aims of education for a multicultural society are supported within the social studies program, a multicultural approach would be most appropriate.

Consider this example in relation to the concept 'family'. If the 'family' were to be presented on the basis of Model A (that is, a monocultural Anglo-Australian perspective), it would be seen as 'mum, dad, two or three kids'. Using Model B, the teacher would present a less monocultural perspective by depicting the concept 'family' as 'generally, dad, mum, kids, and sometimes grandma, grandpa, mum, dad, kids'. From a multicultural perspective (Model C) the 'family' would be seen as fulfilling certain human needs such as security and companionship, and that these needs are common across cultures and are reflected in differing family patterns, none of which are necessarily better than another, but some of which are more often found in certain countries or within certain cultural groups.

Three schools involved in the project outlined in the initial pages of this *Curriculum Paper* have used a multicultural model for the implementation of activities within their social studies program. The activities themselves are not new. However, the framework in which they are presented ensures that the underlying concept or main idea (and not the activity itself) becomes the focus of study.

Figure 1



1. J. A. Banks 'Ethnic Studies As a Process of Curriculum Reform' *Social Education*. vol. 40, p. 78. February 1976.

The main features of all the programs are that the activities:

- represent only a part of the social studies unit being studied in each of the schools;
- fit within, and support the conceptual approach of the existing social studies Syllabus; and
- could be timetabled within the existing daily program.

SERVICETON

Pupils at Serviceton School were involved in activities related to Year 7 Unit 4 *Syllabus in Social Studies for Primary Schools* in which they examined the generalisation that 'the culture of one society may be influenced by the culture of other societies'.

The aims of the unit, as determined by the teachers included:

- to improve the self image of migrant children, by fostering and developing in them a pride in, and deeper knowledge of their cultural and linguistic background.
- to sensitise children to the different culture within Australia and thereby correct misconceptions previously formed.

Five classes were involved. Each studied one country in detail. The countries selected for in-depth study by the whole class (France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Spain) were chosen because of their relevance to the background of children at the school as well as representing particular areas of interest and knowledge of individual class teachers. The study of each country focused on a range of themes; the major ones being food and good health, family life and social interaction, celebration and creative expression, education, work and recreation. These themes were chosen in order to highlight that the behaviour and needs common to all people find expression in culturally different ways.

Each class worked within a framework similar to the sample unit of work presented on the following page. Resources already available in the school's library formed the basis of research for the various countries.

The information provided in the sample unit of work does not reflect the amount of detail the children were expected to learn. In most classes, the amount of information and the extent of its detail, depended upon the reference materials available and the research skills of the individual children. All information, regardless of its source, would need to be treated with caution to ensure that the descriptions do not stereotype any of the groups.

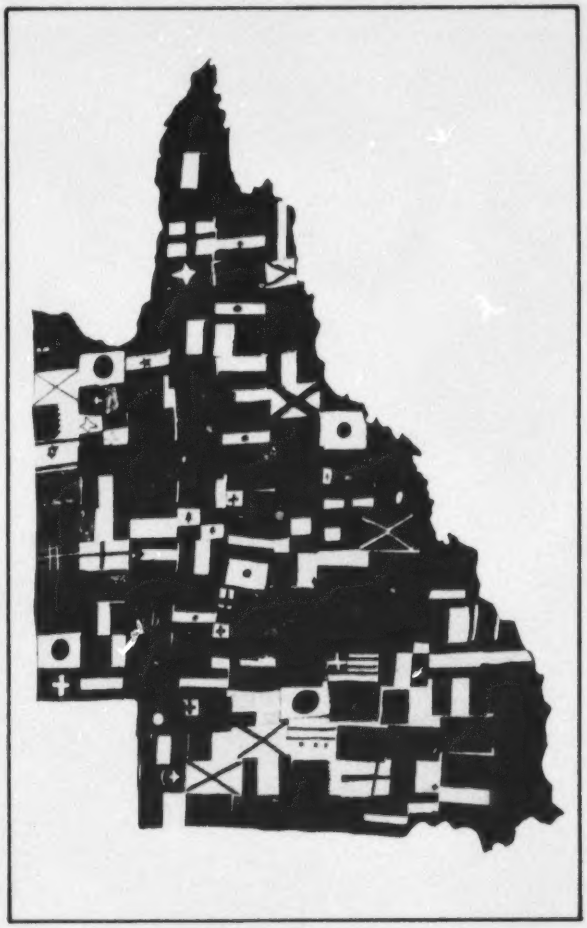
In addition to the five countries studied in depth through whole class activities, other countries were selected by the pupils for further individual research. A multicultural assignment required the pupils to:

- select any non-English speaking country of their own choice
- discuss and describe the way of life of the people in relation to the pupils own way of life
- illustrate the discussion by drawings, pictures, maps, graphs and lists of slides or filmstrips

The suggested topic areas for inclusion in the assignment were history, geographical aspects, the people, education, religion, customs, food, transport, famous places, shelter, clothing, government, economy and currency.

At least 18 countries were studied and the information shared among the five classes. The most significant activity, from a multicultural perspective, was the development of a retrieval chart which clearly demonstrated the underlying needs of all cultures and how Australian society has been influenced by the culture of other societies.

In developing the multicultural unit, activities extended beyond social studies and were integrated into other subject areas. Language arts activities incorporated the stories and folklore of many of the countries studied. The songs and music of other cultures were learnt or listened to. The ABC program *Singing and Listening* proved to be a useful resource for introducing songs from other lands. In one instance, a pupil of Greek background shared his ability to play the *bouzouki*. In addition, the repertoire of the school choir began to include a range of songs of ethnic origin.



The class projects illustrated that Queensland is truly a multicultural State.

A SAMPLE UNIT OF WORK

The following work plan provided the framework for Year 7 classes at Serviceton to examine the generalisation that 'the culture of one society may be influenced by the culture of other societies'.

CONTRIBUTING MAIN IDEAS	LEARNING EXPERIENCES	CONCEPTS
Each country has a number of national characteristics related to political structure, the economy, and language which make it unique.	*Introduce this unit by establishing the geographical position of the country chosen for study and determine its distance from Brisbane.*	
Political Structure	*Examine the main features and historical significance of the type of government for the country of study. Compare with Australia.*	Rules
Language	*Discuss the origin the major language(s) spoken in the country. Learn some common phrases, and compare the language (its structure and function) with English. Discuss where in Australia, languages other than English are spoken.*	
All people have common basic needs, but ways of satisfying those needs may vary from culture to culture.		
Food	*Examine aspects such as farming, marketing, customs associated with food, and foods from the particular country that are available in Australia.*	Needs Resources Marketing Trade Culture
Family Life	*Read stories which deal with life in a family in the country of study, or a family of the particular ethnic background in Australia.*	Groups
Community Life	*Examine the main features of community life in the country of study. Compare and contrast with community life in Australian society.*	Culture
People and Places	*Identify the major geographical features of the country and discuss why, or why not, they are familiar to us in Australia.* *Research the life of a person from the country of study who has contributed to our universal knowledge.*	

Children should work towards a session where groups can compare the characteristics of the selected cultures with each other and with characteristics of Australian culture.

From these comparisons, ascertain the common needs of all people and discuss the reasons for different methods of meeting those needs. Refer to the effects of traditional beliefs and values on the ways of meeting the needs of the people in different cultures.

RIVERVIEW

Year 3 children at Riverview School explored the main idea that 'the needs of people and the ways of satisfying those needs are influenced by climate and environment' (Unit 3 Social Studies Syllabus). The three countries chosen for in depth study were England, Holland and Italy.

The major activities associated with the development of the main idea involved an introductory teacher directed lesson, followed by individual and group research.

The contributing main ideas and activities used to develop the theme in relation to food are outlined below. The first activity ('Australia is part of a family of nations') represented a revision of earlier work by the children, when they had examined each country in isolation. This revision activity was to refocus attention on the relationship between these countries and Australia, as well as to gather information in categories of needs common to people across each of the countries.

Contributing Main Ideas	Activities
Australia is part of a family of nations.	Study the location of England, Italy and Holland in relation to Australia.
The way of life in a country is influenced by its climatic and geographical conditions.	Determine the climate of each country and examine how the climate influences clothing, shelter and the major activities of the people. Individual research by the children contributes to a wall chart for each country, detailing the climate, major food, clothes, housing and language.
The nutrients necessary to stay alive are to be found in the variety of foods eaten by people through the world.	Categorise the major foods eaten in each country according to which nutrient group it belongs (i.e. protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamin or mineral). For each country examine which crops are produced and what needs to be imported to satisfy basic food/nutrient requirements.
Other countries, especially England, have influenced the type of food we eat in Australia.	Examine the origin of all the foods that the children eat. Collect labels from imported food.

A series of worksheets was completed in association with the activities. The worksheets were designed so that the concept (e.g. 'All people need food') becomes the focus of attention and the details for each country are used as exemplars of the main concept.

SEVERNLEA

A similar approach was used with Years 5, 6 and 7 children in a composite class at Severnlea School. Main ideas within Unit 2 of the Year 6 *Syllabus in Social Studies for Primary Schools* provided opportunities for the pupils to create their own worksheets in relation to the food and shelter needs of all people. The natural resources of a number of countries (Italy, England, Japan, New Guinea, America and Australia) were examined in terms of the extent to which they fulfil the requirements of the people of the particular country.

IS THAT ALL?

Education for a multicultural society is more than Easter eggs or fairytales. It's about valuing people and the richness of the cultural and linguistic diversity they bring to the school situation.

Although the activities presented provide a means of applying multicultural education within the classroom, the activities themselves are not the totality of education for a multicultural society. The awareness of multiculturalism that has been created among teachers and pupils in the participating schools is of greater significance than any of the individual activities they may have conducted.

The activities of the schools involved in the project have indicated that education for a multicultural society can become a reality in the classroom. Although it may appear that some of the activities occurring in schools are not significantly different from programs existing in schools long before the gazetting of the Department's policy on multiculturalism, the difference lies in the shift in perspective which accompanies the programs. A most essential element is the awareness by the teacher that the experiences may assist in developing awareness of the cultural diversity of Australian society.

While all of the schools involved are primary schools, many of the ideas and principles that evolved have some applicability at the secondary and pre-school levels.

Although an initial reaction in some schools to involvement in multicultural education was the response 'But we don't have any migrant students', it generally became apparent that education for a multicultural society was just as relevant to the predominantly Anglo Australian school as to the school with pupils of ethnic background.

The task of creating a multicultural perspective within the classroom need not be an onerous one. Both teachers and pupils can benefit from exploring the rich cultural diversity of the Australian community.

Although the availability and use of resource materials are by no means a guarantee that effective multicultural programs will take place, it is obvious that resources are essential to support classroom activities designed to foster multicultural awareness.

An interim list, entitled *Resources for Multicultural Education*, has been prepared by Library and Resource Services and distributed to schools. This list provides a comprehensive selection of materials to support multicultural themes such as life in other cultures, entertainment and the arts, family life, festival and celebrations language studies, and Australia: a multicultural society.

Particular attention is drawn to the suitability of the Multicultural Education Materials Kit produced by the South Australian Education Department. Trialling of the materials in schools throughout Queensland indicated that teachers considered the materials to be excellent resources for supporting programs and activities in education for a multicultural society.

November 1981

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Congratulations and thanks are extended to the pupils and staff of West End Infants School, Ironside, Patricks Road, Riverview, Serviceton and Severnlea State Primary Schools for the contribution of their time, ideas and enthusiasm.

Although the activities discussed in this paper are confined to the experiences of the schools involved in the project, it is recognised that many schools have long been involved in education for a multicultural society. In some cases the reports of experiences in these schools have contributed ideas for the activities undertaken in the present project. Special thanks are extended to all the known as well as unknown contributors.

This paper was prepared by Diane Butler in consultation with other officers of the Curriculum Branch, and prepared for publication by Information and Publications Branch.